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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MEEKS of New York).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 13, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GREGORY W. MEEKS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) for 5 minutes.

IRAQ

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By the end of 2006, most Americans could see that our strategy in Iraq was not working. In January of this year, President Bush outlined his plan to win the war in Iraq. And just last week, Speaker PELOSI and the Democrat majority announced their plan to end the war in Iraq. The only problem with that, Mr. Speaker, is that, as George Orwell wrote, the quickest way to end the war is to lose it, and I believe that the Democratic plan to micromanage

our war in Iraq with benchmarks and deadlines for withdrawal is a prescription for retreat and defeat.

Common sense and the Constitution teach us that Congress can declare war. Congress can fund or choose not to fund war. But Congress must not ever attempt to conduct war. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to heed the call of the Constitution and common sense and reject the Pelosi plan for retreat and defeat in Iraq.

It turns out, Mr. Speaker, that I am actually not alone in my concern about the constitutionality and the common-sense value of the current plan for withdrawal from Iraq being propounded by the majority. The newspaper of record in the home State of Speaker PELOSI, the Los Angeles Times, wrote an editorial yesterday under the title "Do We Really Need a General Pelosi?" adding "Congress can cut funding for Iraq, but it shouldn't micromanage the war." Allow me to quote further from yesterday's lead editorial in the Los Angeles Times:

"After weeks of internal strife, House Democrats have brought forth their proposal for forcing President Bush to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq by 2008. The plan is an unruly mess: bad public policy, bad precedent and bad politics. If the legislation passes, Bush says he'll veto it, as well he should."

The Los Angeles Times editorial board went on:

"It was one thing for the house to pass a nonbinding vote of disapproval. It's quite another for it to set out a detailed timetable with specific benchmarks and conditions for the continuation of the conflict."

The L.A. Times asked, "Imagine if Dwight Eisenhower had been forced to adhere to a congressional war plan in scheduling the Normandy landings or if, in 1863, President Lincoln had been forced by Congress to conclude the Civil War by the following year."

They conclude, "This is the worst kind of congressional meddling in mili-

tary strategy," adding, "By interfering with the discretion of the Commander in Chief and military leaders in order to fulfill domestic political needs, Congress undermines whatever prospects remain of a successful outcome."

And even in today's Washington Post, another lion of the liberal media in America, under the lead editorial headline, The Pelosi Plan for Iraq, they write:

"In short, the Democrat proposal to be taken up this week is an attempt to impose detailed management on a war without regard to the war itself."

The Washington Post adds: "Congress should rigorously monitor the Iraqi government's progress on those benchmarks. By Mr. Bush's own account, the purpose of the troop surge in Iraq is to enable political process. If progress does not occur, the military strategy should be reconsidered."

But here is the key line in the Washington Post lead editorial today: "But aggressive oversight is quite different from mandating military steps according to an inflexible timetable conforming to the need to capture votes in Congress or at the 2008 polls."

It is truly extraordinary how politics and common sense and the Constitution can make such strange bedfellows. I scarcely think, Mr. Speaker, that I have ever come to the floor of this House and quoted at any length the lead editorial in either the Washington Post or the Los Angeles Times. Those two newspapers tend to bookend the country from a liberal perspective in the media. But in both cases, both newspapers have identified what I asserted in the beginning, that my colleagues should heed the call of the Constitution and common sense and reject the Pelosi plan for retreat and defeat in Iraq.

It is the purview of the Congress to declare war. It is the purview of this Congress to vote up or down on whether we should continue to fund military

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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operations. And I would never question that right. But it is not the purview of the Congress, according to our history and Constitution and tradition, to interpose our will, our decisions, our timetables, on military commanders in the field.

I will close, Mr. Speaker, by simply saying that we do have but one choice in Iraq and that is victory. It is my hope and prayer that after much political debate here in Congress, we will give our soldiers the resources they need to achieve victory in Iraq and bring home a much-deserved freedom for those good people and another victory for freedom for the American people.

TIME TO REFOCUS EFFORTS IN THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my intention this morning was to come here and talk about the need to refocus our efforts in the war against terrorism out of Iraq and towards Afghanistan, because, after all, when we were attacked on 9/11, those who attacked us came from Afghanistan, not from Iraq. And President Bush in the very beginning and even now continues to confuse the American people by suggesting that the Iraq war had something to do with 9/11, which it did not.

However, I just listened to my colleague on the Republican side and I have to respond to him somewhat before I move on to the issue of Afghanistan. I want to commend the Speaker and commend the Democratic leadership for the supplemental appropriation bill that they are putting together and that will likely come to the floor next week. It was clear in the November election that the American people want a new direction in Iraq. They realize that the war in Iraq was begun for the wrong reasons, that it was not a response to 9/11, that a lot of the information that was provided to this Congress when the vote was taken to authorize the war was misleading and inaccurate. The fact of the matter is that Congress does have the power to declare war and Congress also has the decision as to whether to fund the war. And this is a supplemental appropriations bill that is going to fund the war and provide the funding for the troops. But at the same time Congress needs to point out that this war needs to move in a new direction and that it is not acceptable to simply give the President a blank check and say, okay, you can move ahead with your surge and essentially escalate the war.

We had a majority in this Congress, including a significant number of Republicans, who just a couple of weeks

ago voted on a resolution that said that the escalation and the surge was a mistake, that we are opposed to that. And so there has to be some effort in this spending bill, which is our prerogative, to indicate why the war has gone in the wrong direction and what needs to be done to end it and ultimately get our troops out of there. That is what we are doing as Democrats and I believe we will have a consensus to achieve that and I think that it will lead in a very short period of time to us getting out of Iraq and leaving the Iraqis to decide their own fate. It is time for that at this time. We shouldn't be sending the resources and we shouldn't be sending our soldiers into a situation where they no longer belong.

My intention today was to come to the floor and talk about, rather than sending our soldiers to Iraq and all the resources we are sending to Iraq, that we should be focusing more on Afghanistan, because that's where the Taliban were and they continue to be. That is where al Qaeda began and continues to exist, including those who were in charge of al Qaeda. And we are not doing enough in Afghanistan. There is a new offensive now on the part of the Taliban which began last month in February and we are trying to counteract that. But we're not focusing on that because we're spending too much time focusing on Iraq in terms of our resources and our troops.

Now, the President finally came to the realization a few weeks ago that this was the case and he started to talk more about what we needed to do in Afghanistan. He sent Vice President CHENEY there. Vice President CHENEY made the point. He also went to Pakistan because Pakistan has this border area where we believe al Qaeda and the Taliban are headquartered and where they simply hide out and regroup before they begin their attacks from Pakistan into Afghanistan. Vice President CHENEY went to Pakistan as well and made the point to President Musharraf that this is unacceptable, you cannot continue to harbor these terrorists, you have to do something to make sure that they are driven out of Pakistan and that they are not being supported by those local authorities or those within the intelligence service in Afghanistan that seem to be providing support to al Qaeda and to the Taliban.

But we need to focus on the issue of Afghanistan in terms of our resources, not only in terms of our troops but also in terms of reconstruction efforts. The Taliban are essentially being financed by increased production of opium and ultimately, of course, heroin. That's how they are financed. We need to deal with local reconstruction projects that will allow the Afghans and particularly the farmers to do things that are not related to the opium trade so they can grow crops other than opium and sustain themselves. This is a major effort that we have to concentrate on and not enough is happening.

I would point out that in the supplemental appropriations bill, we do provide more money for this effort, because the Democratic leadership, as Speaker PELOSI realized, that we are neglecting the war in Afghanistan where the terrorists began. Let's refocus on that. But this supplemental bill is the answer to the problem and it brings us in a new direction.

ENERGY SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, on September 19, 2002, in a Wall Street Journal editorial, former CIA Director James Woolsey described the central challenge we face in the global war on terrorism as the United States' dependence on imported oil. My colleagues, this dependence is providing our enemy with so much leverage that defeating terrorism has become significantly harder.

Let me quote from Mr. Woolsey: "We are at war. We should start by asking what we can do as soon as possible to undercut our enemies' power. Other considerations should now follow, not lead. If we do not act now, we will leave major levers over our fate in the hands of regimes that have attacked us or have fallen under the sway of fanatics who spread hatred of the United States and, indeed, of freedom itself. For all of them, their power derives from their oil. It is time to break their sword."

In order for the United States to effectively fight global terrorism and win in Iraq, we must first reduce our dangerous dependence on imported oil. Energy is the lifeblood of the United States and global economy. U.S. economic prosperity is closely tied to the availability of reliable and affordable supplies of energy. Since 1973, U.S. energy production has grown only 13 percent, while U.S. energy consumption has increased 30 percent. Even when significant increases in efficiency are taken into account, significant increases in demand are projected.

According to the Energy Information Agency, the United States, by 2025, is expected to need 44 percent more petroleum, 38 percent more natural gas, 43 percent more coal and 54 percent more electricity. The Department of Energy predicts by the year 2025, U.S. oil and natural gas demand will rise by 46 percent, with energy demand increasing 1 percent for every 2 percent increase in GDP.

Perhaps the most critical of all energy sources is oil. Just as President Bush said in his 2006 State of the Union speech, America is addicted to oil. A look at the numbers supports his claim. Currently, the United States imports about 60 percent of its oil. The Department of Energy projects this number will increase to 73 percent by